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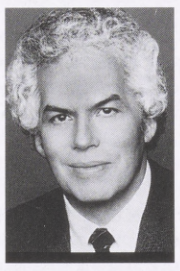
A summary of recent news stories from the University of California San Francisco

UCSF

To Our Neighbors

UCSF researcher wins Nobel Prize



Stanley B. Prusiner, 55, professor of neurology and biochemistry and biophysics at UCSF, was awarded the Nobel Prize for discovering an entirely new disease agent, called a prion, which is implicated in rare, slowly progressing brain diseases.

Prusiner's work and experiments, often conducted and presented in the face of skepticism and controversy, have proved revolutionary in establishing the cause of some of the most baffling and deadly diseases of the central nervous system, including mad cow disease.

Mad cow disease made headlines around the world in recent years as the cause of an epidemic in Great Britain. The cattle there were fed meat and bone meal from sheep contaminated with prions from another infectious disease, scrapie. In 1982, Prusiner proposed that the infectious agent causing scrapie is a mysterious pathogen which he named the prion (pronounced PREE-on), for proteinaceous infectious particle.

Infectious prions also are responsible for fatal human diseases of the central nervous system, such as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) and Gertsmann-Straussler-Scheinker syndrome (GSS). Similiar in some ways to Alzheimer's, these diseases typically result in dementia and death after a long process. Striking one in one million people, CJD has been linked to infected beef.

Prusiner's Nobel Prize-winning research has demonstrated that unlike other pathogens — bacteria, viruses, protozoans and fungi — the prion contains no genetic material. It is mostly a protein. To set forth what many scientists considered to be the heretical idea that the transmissible agent in several rare neurodegenerative diseases is a protein, and not a slow-acting virus as had been generally thought, required great scientific and personal courage.

"He has traveled a long and hard road to get here," says Chancellor Haile Debas, dean of the School of Medicine. "But his single-mindedness and perseverance have won the day and have proven once more that those scientists ahead of their time and who defy dogma, will eventually taste sweet success."

Prusiner's research has opened a new era of biological research into neurodegenerative disorders, and could provide insight into the processes by which nerve cells assume specific forms and functions, perform these roles for decades, and then become senescent.

Prusiner's award brings the total of UCSF's Nobel Prize winners to three. J. Michael Bishop and Harold Varmus, who discovered the genes, called proto-oncogenes, that can lead to cancer, received the prestigious prize in 1989.

Prusiner received his undergraduate training and MD degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He is the winner of numerous awards and honors.

UCSF Stanford merge medical centers

UC Regents and Stanford Trustees approved the historic merger of hospitals and clinics at UCSF and Stanford University, clearing the way for the nonprofit public benefit corporation to begin operation on Nov. 1.

The final approvals culminate a two-year planning process that saw three separate reviews of the merger business plan. Each review concluded that a combined enterprise will be in a better position to compete in the market and to control costs by lowering administrative costs eliminating duplication and creating economies of scale.

UCSF Chancellor Haile T. Debas, who also serves as dean of the UCSF School of Medicine, says that the merger offers the best way to preserve a viable medical center needed to carry out UCSF and Stanford's shared missions of teaching, patient care and research. "For me, personally, there are two exciting and compelling aspects of the merger," Debas says. "First, it will create the nation's foremost academic health center in Northern California. Second, the merger sets the stage to create a revolution in the way academic health care is both organized and delivered."

The merged enterprise will operate hospitals and outpatient practices in San Francisco, Palo Alto and other satellite locations. UCSF patients will continue to receive treatment from their current physicians and health care practitioners at the usual locations: Moffitt/Long Hospitals, UCSF/Mount Zion, the Ambulatory Care Center and the Medical Center's affiliated clinics.

New option for prostate cancer

Unlike many medical centers, UCSF offers a full range of treatment options for prostate cancer, a disease that ranks as the number two cause of cancer death in men.

Surgery and radiation therapy are the mainstays of treatment and technical refinements have improved outcomes with both approaches.

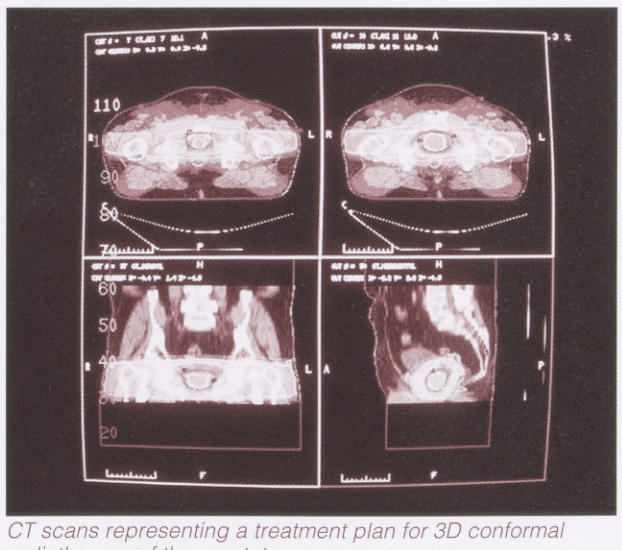
The latest innovative treatment uses radioactive "seeds," which are implanted directly into the prostate of men with clinically localized prostate cancer. The one-time, hour-long outpatient treatment involves an ultrasound-guided insertion via a needle of low-level radioactive seeds into the prostate. The procedure has been performed on more than 40 UCSF patients with early stage prostate cancer.

"The seed implants represent another option for early-stage cancer patients," says Mack Roach III, MD, UCSF associate professor in radiation oncology and medicine.

The seed procedure was virtually reinvented in the 1980s when ultrasound began to be used to guide the insertion of the needle. Projections indicate the procedure may be used by at least one-third of prostate cancer patients by the year 2000, Roach notes.

Roach has pioneered the use of 3-dimensional conformal radiotherapy, which allows multiple X-ray beams of radiation to be guided via computer software to maximize the dose of radiation to the tumor while minimizing damage to normal tissue.

Seed implantation allows the patient to receive treatment without undergoing surgery for a radical prostatectomy, a procedure that requires hospitalization and a lengthy recovery. Compared to a 15 percent risk of incontinence and 50 percent rate of impotence for patients with a radical prostatectomy, seeded patients who have had no prior surgery have less than a one percent risk of incontinence, and a 20 to 25 percent risk of impotence if they are under age 70.



CT scans representing a treatment plan for 3D conformal radiotherapy of the prostate.

Earlier studies released a year ago show the therapy had a 92 percent success rate in controlling early stage cancer at the seven-year follow up. A second study, in which more aggressive prostate cancer was treated with external beam radiation and seed implantation, showed a 73 percent disease-free success rate.

The UCSF radiation oncology department plans to continue studying the treatment in upcoming clinical trials. Call 415/885-7838 to inquire about the procedure.

Mission Bay campus plans up for review, discussion

Five prominent architectural and planning firms selected from a group of about 60 invited to compete to design UCSF's 43-acre campus at Mission Bay will show their plans for public review and comment this fall.

From Oct. 21 through 30, plans will be on display at the American Institute of Architects, 130 Sutter St., Sixth floor, San Francisco. A workshop for public comment on the plans is slated for Wednesday, Oct. 22, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Institute.

And on Saturday, Nov. 1, the five master plans will be presented to a panel from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Schwab Room, 151 Third St.

Situated north of 16th Street between Third and Owens streets, UCSF's Mission Bay campus will be devoted primarily to biomedical research laboratories, the most critical space need of the University. No clinical facilities are planned for the new site.

The competition was developed by the Bay Area Life Sciences Alliance, or BALSA, a privately funded nonprofit corporation dedicated to promoting life sciences in the Bay Area. All plans will be submitted to the UC Regents. Final selection of the winner is scheduled for early November. For more information on the exhibits, please call BALSA at 393-1411.

UCSF, Stanford form center to improve quality of care

UCSF and Stanford University will collaborate on a new program designed to help patients and providers make more informed decisions about medical tests and treatments.

The collaboration, not part of the merger of UCSF and Stanford health care services, is sponsored by the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research of the US Department of Health and Human Services, which named UCSF and Stanford as a joint center among 12 others nationwide.

The centers are charged with reviewing all scientific literature on assigned medical topics, conducting relative cost analyses and issuing guidelines for making treatment decisions. Findings will be distributed widely in reports and will help health care organizations develop strategies for improving the quality of care for the patients they serve.

About 40 Stanford and UCSF faculty members will be affiliated with the UCSF-Stanford center. They will form partnerships with Kaiser Permanente Division of Research in Oakland, and the VA Medical Centers in San Francisco, Palo Alto and Menlo Park. Based in their respective medical schools, researchers also will work with UCSF Stanford Health Care, the new enterprise created by the merger of patient care services at UCSF and Stanford.

City opens first shelter for abused elderly women

San Francisco now joins a handful of cities nationwide leading the way in providing services to older battered women with the opening of a shelter and a new support group.

Both programs are spearheaded by the San Francisco Consortium for Elder Abuse Prevention at the UCSF-affiliated Goldman Institute on Aging and are sponsored jointly by the Consortium and the San Francisco Department of Human Services.

The shelter can provide temporary housing for two women at a time. Clients will receive legal aid and social services during their stay. The support group provides an opportunity to gain courage and moral support.

For information on services available to older women, call Adult Protective Services at 557-5230 or Senior Information and Referral at 626-1033.

More news for you
on the back page

What's happening

To Our Neighbor
October/Novemb
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events at UC Sa

Special Events

Wednesday, Oct. 29: **Gospel Choir at UCSF.** The soulful, inspired sounds of UCSF's singing group, performing at 7 p.m., Cole Hall, 513 Parnassus. $5. Call 476-6932.

Tuesday, Nov. 18: **UCSF Orchestra Performs.** Founded in 1989, the orchestra is made up of accomplished student, faculty, staff and community musicians. Conductor Jeremy Swerling, formerly of the Sacramento symphony, has led the group for the past three years. Hear the orchestra at 7:30 p.m., Millberry Gym. $5. Call 476-6932.

Thursday, Nov. 20 and Friday, Nov. 21: **Hospitals Auxiliary Benefit Sale.** In keeping with its tradition of raising money for patient amenities, the Hospitals Auxiliary of the UCSF Medical Center offers custom sterling silver and Chinese reproductions for sale in the Medical Sciences lobby, 513 Parnassus, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. For information, call 476-4906.

Monday, Dec. 1: **World AIDS Day Forum.** This UCSF event combines a commemoration of World AIDS Day with the announcement of the newly established UCSF AIDS Research Institute (ARI), from 2 to 5 p.m., in Cole Hall, Medical Sciences Building, 513 Parnassus. Researchers will also share important new scientific discoveries.

The afternoon program features a community forum titled, "Accelerating Discovery and Overtaking the Virus: Science and Solutions for the Next Era of AIDS." Dr. Peter Piot, executive director of UNAIDS, will give the keynote address focusing on San Francisco as a model for combating AIDS globally. Piot was one of the discoverers of the Ebola virus and was one of the original AIDS researchers in Africa. Mayor Willie L. Brown will discuss the latest information on AIDS mortality rates in San Francisco and what he hopes to accomplish at his Mayor's AIDS Summit in January.

Thursday, Dec. 4: **Annual Holiday Crafts Faire.** Here's a chance to buy handmade crafts created by UCSF employees and community artists as holiday gifts for family and friends. The sale will be held from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Millberry Gym Conference Center, 500 Parnassus. Call 476-2675 for an entry form to sell crafts or for general information.

Wednesday, Dec. 10: **Annual Holiday Concert.** Arts & Performances presents the UCSF all-student a cappella choir, the Vocal Chords, and special guest artists, 6 p.m., Lange Reading Room, UCSF Library, 530 Parnassus. Free. The holiday concert is supported by the Sarah B. Childs Chamber Music Fund. Call 476-6761.

Mission Bay Public Meetings

The Bay Area Life Sciences Alliance (BALSA), a privately funded non-profit corporation dedicated to promoting life sciences in the Bay Area, is sponsoring a competition of prominent architectural and planning firms that are designing plans for UCSF's next campus at Mission Bay. BALSA and UCSF invite the public to view the plans by the five finalist firms. For more information, call BALSA at 393-1411.

Oct. 21-30: **An Exhibition of Visions.** Plans will be exhibited, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 9 a.m.-6 p.m., at the American Institute of Architects, 130 Sutter Street, 6th Floor. Admission is free.

Oct. 22: **A Community Voice.** A workshop will allow for public comment on the visions for UCSF's new site at Mission Bay on Wednesday, from 5:30-7:30 p.m., at the American Institute of Architects, 130 Sutter Street, 6th Floor. Admission is free.

Nov. 1: **A Day of Presentations.** The plans will be presented to a jury on Saturday, from 9:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m., at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's Schwab Room, 151 Third St. *There is an admission charge to visit the SFMOMA.*

Women's Programs

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The Women's Resource Center sponsors many workshops and events in observance of this problem and regularly throughout the year. Call 476-5222 to register or for information.

Wednesdays, Oct. 8-29: **The Silent Witness Project.** This national touring exhibit is a living memorial to women who were murdered by their partners in domestic violence–related crimes. Resources for survivors will be on display, and staff members from the Women's Resource Center and Rape Prevention Education Program will be available to answer questions. The display tours the following UCSF sites: N 225, enter at 513 Parnassus, Oct. 8, noon-1 p.m.; Mission Center Building Main Lobby, Oct. 15, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; San Francisco General Hospital cafeteria, 1001 Potrero Ave., Oct. 22, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; and Mount Zion cafeteria, 1600 Divisadero, Oct. 29, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 8: **Domestic Abuse: Silence = Violence.** A panel of women from diverse backgrounds, communities and experiences will discuss their personal stories of how they survived domestic violence and the ways it has shaped their perspectives and lives. N 225, enter at 513 Parnassus, noon-1 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 15: **Self-Defense for Women — Level I.** Millberry Union Fitness Center, Studio 2, 500 Parnassus. 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Cost is $40 for UCSF affiliates and seniors; $65 for the general public.

Tuesday, Nov. 18: **Readings from "Stolen Moments."** Poet and UCSF employee Nellie Wong reveals the working life of a woman, her roots in Chinese-American culture and her commitment to justice in a reading from her third published work. N 217, enter at 513 Parnassus, noon-1 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 4: **Women and Science.** Women in Life Sciences and the Women's Resource Center present a screening and discussion of the film "Asking Different Questions," which explores the difficulties women scientists have faced in their fields. N 217, 513 Parnassus. 6-8 p.m.

Institute of Healing Arts & Sciences

The Institute of Healing Arts and Sciences and the Millberry Fitness Center offer a Friday lecture series this fall on alternatives in health care and healing. All lectures are on Fridays, from noon-1 p.m., in the Health Sciences West Building, Room 300, 513 Parnassus. Call 330-5353 for information. Here are the topics of Friday lectures:

- Oct. 10 **Energetic Approaches to Healing**
- Oct. 17 **Passion and Compassion: Caregiving for Self and Others**
- Oct. 24 **Art Medicine as Alternative Medicine**
- Oct. 31 **Treat Yourself to Homeopathy**
- Nov. 7 **Chinese Medicine: Introduction to Qi Gong**
- Nov. 14 **Chinese Medicine: Concepts and Therapies**
- Nov. 21 **Herbs and Aromatherapy**

Blood Drives

Blood drives are scheduled the following Wednesdays:

Nov. 5 Hellman Building at Mount Zion, 1600 Divisadero, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Nov. 12 Mission Center Building Conference Room, 1855 Folsom, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Blood donations are also accepted weekdays 8 a.m.-7:45 p.m. or Saturdays 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at UCSF's Blood Donor Center, Room 131 Long Hospital, 505 Parnassus. Call 476-6989 for information or appointments.

Detail of artwork by Karyn Young

Arts & Entertainment

Cole Hall Cinema. Arts & Performances shows films Thursdays and Fridays in Cole Hall, 513 Parnassus. The fall schedule opens Oct. 2 and continues feature films, including "Chasing Amy," "Men In Black," and "My Best Friend's Wedding." Call 476-2542 for the latest films and show times.

Hospitals Auxiliary Exhibits. The Hospitals Auxiliary of the Medical Center at UCSF will exhibit the work of the following artists on the first floor at the Moffitt/Long Hospitals, 505 Parnassus. Proceeds from Hospital Auxiliary exhibits benefit patients and their families. For information, call 476-4906.
Sept. 22-Oct. 29
Oils by Andrew Thomas and monoprints by Beth Katz .
Oct. 29-Dec. 29
Hand-colored prints by Claus Sievert and watercolors and prints by Margo Bors.

Faculty/Alumni House Exhibits. "Between Memory & Imagination," an exhibit of lithographs and mixed media on handmade paper by Karyn Young, continues to be on display through Nov. 26 on weekdays or by appointment at 745 Parnassus Ave.

Starting Dec. 5, "Somewhere Between the Moon and the Sea," a combination of stylized watercolor and pastel aquatic and beach scenes by Sherrie Smith will be on display weekdays or by appointment through February. A reception for Smith will be held Friday, Dec. 5 from 5-7:30 p.m. Call 476-4723 for information or appointments.

Brown Bag Lectures

UCSF Public Service Programs, part of Public Affairs, offers free weekly lectures on **Wednesdays at 12:10 p.m. in Health Sciences West, Room 300,** 505 Parnassus (P); monthly on Thursdays in Room 125, UCSF/Mission Center Building (MCB), 1855 Folsom St.; and monthly on Tuesdays in Herbst Hall, UCSF/Mount Zion (MZ), 1600 Divisadero. Please note, the Parnassus location has been changed for the remainder of the year. Call 476-4394 for more information.

- Oct. 15 **Stroke: An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure. (P)**
- Oct. 16 **Let's Get Organized. (MCB)**
- Oct. 21 **New Directions in Cancer Research. (MZ)**
- Oct. 22 **Breast Cancer: The Disease of the Decade — Why It Merits So Much Attention. (P)**
- Oct. 29 **Too Many Specialists, Too Little Diversity, Poor Distribution? (P)**
- Nov. 5 **Power Tools for Designing Drugs. (P)**
- Nov. 12 **VAMC: From Laboratory to Bedside. (P)**
- Nov. 18 **Managing Depression and the Holiday Blues. (MZ)**
- Nov. 19 **Are You Up To Date on Your Immunizations? (P)**
- Nov. 20 **Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction. (MCB)**
- Nov. 26 **Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction. (P)**
- Dec. 3 **HIV: Time for a Reality Check. (P)**
- Dec.10 **The Gene Dream Dilemma. (P)**

Campus Tours

Public Service Programs provides free campus tours beginning at 1 p.m. on the first Friday of each month. Meet in the Medical Sciences lobby, 513 Parnassus. Group tours may be arranged by appointment. Call 476-4394 for information or appointments.

Recreation

UCSF Millberry Fitness Center. Millberry Programs & Services features a variety of ongoing classes. The Self-Development program offers the following food and wine courses: A Thanksgiving Feast, Saturday, Nov. 8, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; and Fine Wines, Wednesdays, Oct. 8-Nov. 12, 7-9 p.m. The Personal Fitness program offers Personal Best Fitness Training, Fitness Evaluation, and Personal Best Nutrition. Call 476-3588 for fitness programs and 502-4398 for nutrition programs. Call 476-1115 for registration, locations and price information, or for a fall course catalog.

Outdoors Unlimited. A cooperative resource center for outdoor recreation and adventure offers Tahoe ski cabins and outdoor equipment for rent. OU Center, 550 Parnassus, under the UCSF Library. Call 476-2078.

Women's Health

The UCSF Birth Center at 533 Parnassus provides a comprehensive spectrum of services for family planning, maternity and infant care. Along with private birthing suites, the center offers integrated primary care and prenatal care at UCSF's Parnassus, Daly City and BaySpring sites. Infertility services and fetal diagnosis treatment are also available. For more information or to request a tour of the Birth Center, call 476-6667.

Great Expectations for Women's Health sponsors classes in labor, birth preparation and parenting and has a library with a wealth of books, tapes and brochures. To register or to get a schedule of additional birthing and parenting classes. To find a physician specializing in women's health or to register for the following classes, call 476-0668.

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Wednesday, Oct. 15: **Understanding the Dimensions of Childbirth.** All are welcome to attend this film and discussion at any phase of pregnancy. 7-8 p.m. Free.

Wednesdays, Oct. 29-Nov. 26: **Childbirth Preparation: Birth Alternatives.** The needs and interests of women who wish to have an intimate, fully involved birth experience are addressed in this five-week class series. 6:45 p.m.-8:45 p.m. $100 for UCSF patients; $130 for non-UCSF patients.

Monday, Nov. 10: **Infant and Child Emergency Care.** This class will assess the signs of illness, exposure to contagious diseases and handling accidents, with emphases on childproofing, safe medicine cabinets and first aid supplies. 6:30 p.m.-9 p.m. $20 for one person/$25 for two people.

Wednesday, Dec. 10: **Parenting.** The impact of a new baby on various aspects of lifestyles as well as balancing the needs of infants and parents will be addressed in this class. 6:45-9:15 p.m. $20 for one person/$25 for two people.

Volunteer Program

Volunteer Services acquaints prospective volunteers with opportunities available at the UCSF Medical Center. For dates, times and locations of orientations on the Parnassus campus, call 476-1196. UCSF/Mount Zion's volunteer orientations are offered three times each month; call 885-7353 for the UCSF/Mount Zion schedule.

Mount Zion Community Meetings

UCSF/Mount Zion holds meetings to keep the community apprised of activities of interest and to listen to neighborhood concerns. The next meeting will be held Oct. 28, 7 p.m., Executive Board Room, 2nd floor, UCSF/Mount Zion, 1600 Divisadero. Call 476-3206 for information.

Aging Education

The UCSF/Mount Zion Center on Aging presents the Community Health Education Series, held in Laurel Heights Auditorium, 3333 California, from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Programs are free, but registration is requested as seating is limited. Call 750-5342 for registration and information.

Saturday, Oct. 4: **Managing The Future: Planning for Long-Term Health Care Needs.** This workshop aims to provide older adults with information to enable them to avoid crises and manage the high costs of long-term care.

Saturday, Nov. 22: **Memory Loss and Alzheimer's Disease.** This workshop explores normal memory loss and discusses in depth the newest approaches to diagnoses, disease management and cutting-edge research for Alzheimer's Disease.

UCSF

University of California San Francisco
Public Affairs
3333 California Street, Suite 103
San Francisco, CA 94143-0462

A technique performed in the Pediatric Cardiac Catherization Lab fixed the problem without surgery.

He was born with a hole in his heart.

But Clifford Chan's "jumping-off-the-walls" energy, as his mother described it, masked any clue of a defect that was causing his little heart to overwork. A murmur in Clifford's heart, detected by UCSF pediatrician Marvin Kolotkin during a routine age three checkup, first drew suspicion of an abnormality. Clifford was later referred to pediatric cardiologist Paul Stanger, and an electrocardiogram revealed a hole—larger than a soggy Cheerio, but smaller than a dime—in the wall between the two upper chambers of the heart, the left and right atrium. This hole, known as atrial septal defect (ASD), allows extra blood to pour through the right ventricle, pulmonary artery and into the lungs, making the heart pump and work harder. The extra blood flow could also damage the lung's blood vessels.

"Dr. Stanger asked if Clifford acted unusually tired, turned blue, squatted while he played to get rest or air, or passed out," says his mother, Leslie Chan, who has another son older than Clifford and a younger daughter. "I told him 'No—he's just your normal wild little kid.'"

Many children with ASD suffer few, if any symptoms, and because Clifford was doing well, his doctor and parents decided to take a wait- and-see approach for about a year. In rare cases, ASDs close without any treatment, but an electrocardiogram last spring, when Clifford was 4½ years-old, showed the same stubborn hole in the wall and too much blood flowing where it should not. The test also revealed Clifford's heart was slightly enlarged, a sign of strain.

The heart, like any other body muscle or even a car engine, suffers wear and tear when it is overworked. An unfixed ASD could cause heart failure decades later, or sudden stroke or heart attack. Bob and Leslie Chan did not want those risks weighing on their son.

ASDs are typically corrected by surgery in childhood to prevent those serious problems. Surgery, however, requires opening the child's chest, using a heart-lung bypass machine to keep blood flowing through the rest of the body while the hole is patched and stitched, and a three- to five-day hospital stay to recover from the operation.

Techniques to close ASDs without surgery are now being tried, and Stanger referred the Chans to Philip Moore, who directs the UCSF Pediatric Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory and is testing a small device, called the "Cardioseal." Clifford qualified for the experimental procedure, which so far has been shown to be safe and effective, and the Chans balked only at the timing of the procedure—they wanted to wait until after Clifford's pre-school graduation.

On June 23, he entered the cardiac catheterization laboratory where a team led by Moore would get right to the heart of Clifford's problem. The UCSF lab, which opened last year, specializes in providing high resolution digital images of the heart. It is the first of its kind that is fully networked so that off-site physicians who have the right software can access the images. In addition, digital technology uses less than 1/100th the amount of radiation than traditional X-ray movies to obtain images.

In Clifford's case, imaging devices in the lab offered a precise view of the size and location of the hole and a roadmap to get there. Moore placed a long thin hollow tube—or catheter—into a blood vessel in the boy's groin, and snaked it through vessels into the heart's chambers. Inside the tip of the catheter was the two-inch long Cardioseal device, consisting of two small metal umbrella-like frames that fold against each other. The frames are connected at their center and covered with a polyester material. Moore guided the device across the ASD, popped open one of the tiny umbrellas and covered the hole on the left side. The second umbrella was opened in the right atrium, folding against the atrial wall and holding the device in place to complete the closure.

Clifford spent a night in the hospital, and the only effects when he got home the next day were a little soreness in the groin and grogginess from the anesthesia. Tests a month later showed that the device sealed about 80 percent of the defect and Clifford's own tissue grew naturally around it, plugging the rest of the hole.

Last month, Clifford started kindergarten at Alice Fong Yu Alternative School in San Francisco's Sunset District. Occasionally he points to his scarless chest and tells people that doctors fixed him.

Clifford is still the high energy kid, who likes to climb and jump off playground equipment at school and in the Chan's backyard. Bob and Leslie Chan joke that their son may some day be a competitive gymnast. He has the physical ability—and certainly the heart.

—Andy Evangelista

For more information about the UCSF pediatric interventional cardiology program, call 476-1040.

Tom Wachs

To Our Neighbors
October/November/December 1997

UCSF researcher wins Nobel Prize

UCSF Stanford Health Care to begin operations Nov. 1

Mission Bay campus plans up for public review, input

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Program gives heart disease patients new hope

Heart disease patients committed to improving their health are finding a new reason for hope in the Heart Disease Reversal Program now offered as a collaborative project by UCSF and California Pacific medical centers.

Located at UCSF/Mount Zion Medical Center, the new program provides a combination of moderate exercise, stress management, nutritional guidance and group support that offers patients a healthier lifestyle that can reverse heart disease.

The program is based on the work of UCSF clinical professor of medicine Dean Ornish, MD, and his colleagues at the Preventive Medicine Research Institute in Sausalito.

"This is the only program scientifically proven to reverse heart disease without drugs or surgery," Ornish says. "It provides many people with a scientifically grounded way of empowering themselves to make comprehensive changes in diet and lifestyle."

Part of the newly formed UCSF Program in Integrative Medicine, the program is the only one of its kind in Northern California and will serve patients throughout the greater Bay Area.

Participants in the program meet initially for a 12-week session, during which they receive more than 100 hours of care, heart-disease education, stress management, and heart-healthy gourmet meals with nutritional education. The team of experts includes a physician, an exercise physiologist, nurses, a registered dietitian, a specially trained chef and stress management and group leaders.

It's intensive, but it may be the key to better cardiac health for patients like Dan Marks — who already has a family history of heart disease. An investment banker from Oakville, Marks, 55, had his first heart attack 11 years ago and he doesn't want to face another one.

Chris T. Anderson

Dan Marks exercises at UCSF/Mount Zion.

"My personal challenge is to make this integrative plan work for me" he says. "I think this is the path to a more balanced life."

For more information on the program, contact Kevin Worth, RN, manager of the Heart Disease Reversal Program at 415/353-4278.

Drug reduces bone fractures

For the first time, a drug has been found to reduce bone fractures in women with no previous spinal fractures but who are at risk for osteoporosis.

UCSF researchers found that women taking the study drug alendronate are at 14 percent lower risk of developing any type of fracture and 44 percent lower risk of experiencing a first spinal fracture than women taking a placebo. "Every postmenopausal woman should talk to her doctor about her risk for osteoporosis and whether she may benefit from treatment," says Steven R. Cummings, professor of medicine and epidemiology and biostatistics.

UCSF is participating in a national study, which showed last year a 51 percent lower risk of hip fractures among postmenopausal women who took alendronate. Developed by Merck & Co. Inc. USA, the drug is available as Fosamax.

Drug halts Kaposi's sarcoma

HIV-infected patients suffering from Kaposi's sarcoma (KS) who were treated with the antiviral drug foscarnet had significantly longer periods before their KS worsened than if they were treated with other drugs, a UCSF study has found.

The study evaluated 66 patients who were treated at the UCSF AIDS Program at San Francisco General Hospital. All of the patients were receiving treatment for CMV retinitis, a sight-threatening eye disease that is one of the opportunistic infections brought on by HIV-infection. The patients were being treated either with foscarnet or with ganciclovir. “What the study suggests is that foscarnet may be an effective therapy for AIDS-related Kaposi's sarcoma but we need further study to confirm our findings,” says Mark Jacobson, associate professor of medicine.